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Democracy and Governance Program: Sensitized Community Yields Fresh Start

Fourteen year old Urmila Tamang (*name changed to protect her privacy*) of Chitwan, Nepal belongs to a traditional Mongolian ethnic community known for its simplicity. Anita, a woman from the neighboring district, approached Urmila's unsuspecting parents in 2002 and promised a lucrative job for their daughter in a circus in Varanasi, a small city in north India. Ignorant about the various dimensions of human trafficking, they agreed to send Urmila to the circus job without enquiring about its nature. There, she endured a year of labor exploitation and sexual harassment as an acrobat and tight rope walker.



Our Daughter/Our Pride women's group participates in an orientation class to combat trafficking

Encouraged by her success, Anita contacted two other girls and enticed them with tales of riches and luxury. Fortunately, since the girls participated in a USAID-supported non-formal education literacy class and anti-trafficking training, they recognized these overtures as trafficking and shared this information with their facilitator who subsequently notified the police. Consequently, Anita was arrested at which time she confessed that she had taken many girls to the circus for undue personal gain.

The knowledge about human trafficking amongst the community members saved Urmila from being further exploited. She was rescued and is now an active member of the youth group to raise awareness against human trafficking, and says "I am more aware of my rights and am now actively involved in spreading awareness against trafficking amongst my peers."

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